

## **APPENDIX B**

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### Environmental Review

# NEGATIVE DECLARATION

Pursuant to Sections 15070 and 15071 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) guidelines, the California Department of Fish and Game proposed to adopt this Negative Declaration.

**1. Title and Short Description of Project:** Antelope Valley and Smithneck Creek Wildlife Areas Land Management Plan.

The California Department of Fish and Game (Department) is proposing to adopt a land management plan for the Antelope Valley and Smithneck Creek Wildlife Areas to help guide their planning and operations.

The Antelope Valley Wildlife Area (AVWA) and Smithneck Creek Wildlife Area (SCWA) support a diversity of montane vegetation types including eastside pine forest, big sagebrush scrub, woodlands, chaparral, riparian scrub, and meadows. These extensive natural areas provide valuable habitats for the Loyalton-Truckee mule deer herd and other wildlife and related recreational opportunities.

The Department, as part of the Resources Agency of the State of California, has the following mission to guide its planning and operations: “The mission of the Department of Fish and Game is to manage California’s diverse fish, wildlife, and plant resources, and the habitats upon which they depend, for their ecological values and for their use and enjoyment by the public.”

The purpose of this land management plan (LMP) is to:

1. guide management of habitats, species, and programs described in the LMP to achieve the Department’s mission to protect and enhance wildlife values;
  2. serve as a guide for appropriate public uses of the AVWA and SCWA;
  3. serve as descriptive inventory of fish, wildlife, and native plant habitats that occur on or use the AVWA and SCWA;
  4. provide an overview of the property’s operation and maintenance and of the personnel requirements associated with implementing management goals (this LMP also serves as a budget planning aid for annual regional budget preparation); and
  5. present the environmental documentation necessary for compliance with state and federal statutes and regulations, provide a description of potential and actual environmental impacts that may occur during plan management, and identify mitigation measures to avoid or lessen these impacts.
- 2. Location of Project:** The proposed project is located in the AVWA and SCWA which occupy approximately 5,700 acres and 1,400 acres, respectively, in the Sierra Valley watershed in Sierra County.
- 3. Project Proponent:** California Department of Fish and Game
- 4. Said project will not have a significant effect on the environment for the following reasons:**

The proposed project involves the adoption of a management plan, which of itself would cause no environmental impacts. Implementation of the management plan may include actions that would physically alter the environment. Possible actions that may result from the adoption and implementation of the management plan were anticipated and analyzed at a programmatic level.

Although implementation of some elements of the plan (e.g., restoration or enhancement activities) would have the potential for environmental impacts, these impacts would not be substantial. The LMP includes required tasks which, when implemented, would avoid significant construction impacts, and most projects would enhance rather than degrade environmental resources. In addition, all projects that may be implemented in the future as a result of adopting the LMP must be subjected to CEQA review according to CEQA Guidelines Section 15168, in light of the information in this document, to determine if additional CEQA documentation is necessary. The type of additional CEQA documentation completed would be determined based on CEQA Guidelines Sections 15162–15164.

5. As a result thereof, the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report pursuant to CEQA (Division 13 of the Public Resources Code of the State of California) is not required.

In accordance with Section 21082.1 of the California Environmental Quality Act, California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) has independently reviewed and analyzed the Initial Study and Negative Declaration for the proposed project and finds that the Initial Study and Negative Declaration reflect the independent judgment of the DFG.

I hereby approve this project:

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX B ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

PROJECT INFORMATION	
1. Project Title:	Antelope Valley Wildlife Area (AVWA) and Smithneck Creek Wildlife Area (SCWA) Land Management Plan (LMP)
2. Lead Agency Name and Address:	Department of Fish and Game (Department) North Central Region 1701 Nimbus Road Rancho Cordova, CA 95670
3. Contact Person and Phone Number:	Jim Lidberg (530) 283-5630
4. Project Location:	The main unit of AVWA is located 20 miles northwest of Reno, Nevada, and 4 miles southwest of Loyalton in Sierra County, California. AVWA is in Township 21 North, Range 15 East, in Sections 2, 4, 22–24, 26–28, and 33–36 on the Antelope Valley, Sierraville, Loyalton, and Sardine Peak 15-foot USGS quadrangles. It is situated on the southern edge of the Sierra Valley. The Merry-Go-Round Unit is 6 miles northeast of Sierraville and lies to the east of State Route 49. It is located 2 miles northwest of the main Antelope Valley unit in Township 21 North, Range 15 East, in Sections 18–20, and 30 in the Antelope Valley 15-foot USGS quadrangle. The Doe Canyon, Bear Valley Creek, and Badenaugh Units of SCWA are located 2 miles south of Loyalton. The SCWA Units are in Township 21 North, Range 16 East, in Sections 29, 30, 32, and 33, M. D. B. & M. on the Loyalton 15-foot USGS quadrangle.
5. Project Sponsor's Name and Address:	Department of Fish and Game (Department) North Central Region 1701 Nimbus Road Rancho Cordova, CA 95670
6. General Plan Designation:	Forest (F) and Open Space (OS)
7. Zoning:	General Forest (GF)
8. Description of Project: (Describe the whole action involved, including, but not limited to later phases of the project, and any secondary, support, or off-site features necessary for its implementation. Attach additional sheets if necessary.)	The project being analyzed in this initial study is the LMP, all proposed actions within the LMP, and the proposed watershed restoration projects described in Appendix D. See LMP Chapter 4, Goals and Tasks, and Appendix D for details of the proposed project.
9. Surrounding Land Uses and Setting: (Briefly describe the project's surroundings)	See LMP Chapter 2, Property Description
10. Other public agencies whose approval is required: (e.g., permits, financing approval, or participation agreement)	US Army Corp of Engineers (USACE), Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB)
ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED:	
The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a "Potentially Significant Impact" as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetics	<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture Resources
<input type="checkbox"/> Biological Resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Cultural Resources
<input type="checkbox"/> Hazards & Hazardous Materials	<input type="checkbox"/> Hydrology / Water Quality
<input type="checkbox"/> Mineral Resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Noise
<input type="checkbox"/> Public Services	<input type="checkbox"/> Recreation
<input type="checkbox"/> Utilities / Service Systems	<input type="checkbox"/> Mandatory Findings of Significance
	<input type="checkbox"/> Air Quality
	<input type="checkbox"/> Geology / Soils
	<input type="checkbox"/> Land Use / Planning
	<input type="checkbox"/> Population / Housing
	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation / Traffic
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None

**DETERMINATION (To be completed by the Lead Agency)**

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

I find that the proposed project **COULD NOT** have a significant effect on the environment, and a **NEGATIVE DECLARATION** will be prepared. ☒

I find that although the proposed project **COULD** have a significant effect on the environment, there **WILL NOT** be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A **MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION** will be prepared. ☐

I find that the proposed project **MAY** have a significant effect on the environment, and an **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT** is required. ☐

I find that the proposed project **MAY** have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT** is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed. ☐

I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier **EIR** or **NEGATIVE DECLARATION** pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier **EIR** or **NEGATIVE DECLARATION**, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required. ☐

Sandra Morey

Signature

7/29/08

Date

Sandra morey

Printed Name

Regional Manager

Title

Dept. of Fish + Game

Agency

## EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

1. A brief explanation is required for all answers except “No Impact” answers that are adequately supported by the information sources a lead agency cites in the parentheses following each question. A “No Impact” answer is adequately supported if the referenced information sources show that the impact simply does not apply to projects like the one involved (e.g., the project falls outside a fault rupture zone). A “No Impact” answer should be explained where it is based on project-specific factors as well as general standards (e.g., the project will not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on a project-specific screening analysis).
2. All answers must take account of the whole action involved, including off-site as well as on-site, cumulative as well as project-level, indirect as well as direct, and construction as well as operational impacts.
3. Once the lead agency has determined that a particular physical impact may occur, then the checklist answers must indicate whether the impact is potentially significant, less than significant with mitigation, or less than significant. “Potentially Significant Impact” is appropriate if there is substantial evidence that an effect may be significant. If there are one or more “Potentially Significant Impact” entries when the determination is made, an EIR is required.
4. “Negative Declaration: Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated” applies where the incorporation of mitigation measures has reduced an effect from “Potentially Significant Impact” to a “Less-Than-Significant Impact.” The lead agency must describe the mitigation measures, and briefly explain how they reduce the effect to a less-than-significant level (mitigation measures from “Earlier Analyses,” as described in (5) below, may be cross-referenced).
5. Earlier analyses may be used where, pursuant to the tiering, program EIR, or other CEQA process, an effect has been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or negative declaration. Section 15063(c)(3)(D). In this case, a brief discussion should identify the following:
  - a) Earlier Analysis Used. Identify and state where they are available for review.
  - b) Impacts Adequately Addressed. Identify which effects from the above checklist were within the scope of and adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and state whether such effects were addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis.
  - c) Mitigation Measures. For effects that are “Less than Significant with Mitigation Measures Incorporated,” describe the mitigation measures which were incorporated or refined from the earlier document and the extent to which they address site-specific conditions for the project.
6. Lead agencies are encouraged to incorporate into the checklist references to information sources for potential impacts (e.g., general plans, zoning ordinances). Reference to a previously prepared or outside document should, where appropriate, include a reference to the page or pages where the statement is substantiated.
7. Supporting Information Sources: A source list should be attached, and other sources used or individuals contacted should be cited in the discussion.
8. This is only a suggested form, and lead agencies are free to use different formats; however, lead agencies should normally address the questions from this checklist that are relevant to a project’s environmental effects in whatever format is selected.
9. The explanation of each issue should identify:  
the significance criteria or threshold, if any, used to evaluate each question; and  
the mitigation measure identified, if any, to reduce the impact to less than significance.

This initial study (IS) was prepared in accordance with the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the State CEQA Guidelines to identify and evaluate the potential environmental impacts of operating Antelope Valley Wildlife Area (AVWA) and Smithneck Creek Wildlife Area (SCWA) under the provisions of the Antelope Valley Wildlife Area and Smithneck Creek Wildlife Area Land Management Plan (LMP). This IS concludes that adoption and implementation of the LMP would result in “less-than-significant impacts” or “no impacts” to the environment.

The goals, tasks, and activities described in the LMP (including watershed restoration activities on Department lands described in Appendix D) were evaluated for their potential effects on the environment. Also, actions that may result from adoption of this LMP were anticipated and potential accompanying impacts were analyzed. The environmental analysis was conducted concurrent with the development of the LMP. Impact minimization measures were incorporated within the LMP wherever possible to help ensure that planned actions described in the LMP, including those to be implemented in the future, will not result in significant environmental impacts. Therefore, the CEQA analysis summarized herein is intended to be adequate for many future projects implemented in a manner consistent with the goals and tasks of the adopted LMP. However, some actions described in the LMP, such as roadway realignments, may require additional CEQA analysis documentation once the project details are known. All projects that may be implemented in the future as a result of adopting the LMP must be subjected to CEQA review according to CEQA Guidelines Section 15168, in light of the information in this document, to determine if additional CEQA documentation is necessary. The type of additional CEQA documentation completed would be determined based on CEQA Guidelines Sections 15162–15164.

The LMP provides the environmental and regulatory setting description, and the project description used for this CEQA analysis. Chapters 1 and 2 describe the geographical and management setting, including legal constraints, existing agreements, and planning influences and considerations. Chapter 3 describes existing resource conditions. Chapter 4 identifies management goals and tasks which, along with the watershed restoration actions described in Appendix D, serve as the project description.

Watershed restoration activities on federal lands described in Appendix D are considered a discretionary federal action subject to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). To determine whether these proposed actions could significantly affect the quality of the human environment, NEPA requires the preparation of an Environmental Assessment (EA). The United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service (USFS), Tahoe National Forest (TNF), Sierraville Ranger District, will serve as the NEPA Lead Agency in the production of an EA.

## B.1 AESTHETICS

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>I.</b>	<b>Aesthetics. Would the project:</b>				
a)	Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b)	Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c)	Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d)	Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

## DISCUSSION

**a), b), c), d) No impact.** Adoption and implementation of the proposed LMP would preserve or enhance existing native vegetation and natural visual resources, would not involve the construction of any new buildings or outdoor lighting, and would not alter views from any scenic vistas. Facility improvements that could result from the implementation of the LMP would be very small in scale (e.g. signage and fencing), and goals and tasks in the LMP require that the style of these facilities be in keeping with the rural character and natural environment of the wildlife areas. Therefore, adoption of the LMP would not adversely affect scenic vistas, views, visual character, or scenic resources, nor would it create light or glare effects.

In addition, prior to the implementation of any projects that are consistent with the LMP, the Department would subject them to CEQA review according to CEQA Guidelines Section 15168, in light of the information in this document, to determine if additional CEQA documentation is necessary. The type of additional CEQA documentation completed would be determined based on CEQA Guidelines Sections 15162–15164.



## B.2 AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>II.</b>	<b>Agricultural Resources.</b>				
	<p>In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997, as updated) prepared by the California Department of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland.</p> <p>Would the project:</p>				
	a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	c) Involve other changes in the existing environment, which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

## DISCUSSION

**a), b), c) No impact.** Adoption and implementation of the proposed LMP would allow continued use of grazing, would conserve existing land resources, and would not result in the building of new structures or impervious surfaces. Therefore, the project would not affect the ability to farm any prime farmland, unique farmland, or farmland of statewide importance, and would not affect any lands under a Williamson Act contract. No impact to agricultural resources would occur.

## B.3 AIR QUALITY

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>III. Air Quality.</b>					
Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied on to make the following determinations.					
Would the project:					
a)	Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b)	Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c)	Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d)	Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e)	Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## DISCUSSION

**a), b), c), d), e) Less-than-significant impact.** Adoption of the proposed LMP would generate no automobile trips, construction activities, or emission of pollutants or odors for operations; therefore, adoption of the LMP would not adversely affect air quality.

Although implementation of some of the management tasks described in the proposed LMP would involve the use of construction equipment (e.g., installation of fencing and signage, restoration projects proposed in Appendix D), thus temporarily increasing equipment emissions, these would be short-term impacts and would involve a limited number of construction machines.

A preliminary modeling effort (Exhibit 1-1) conducted using the assumption that construction actions would include the simultaneous use of one excavator for up to eight hours per work day and one rubber-tired dozer for up to six hours per work day showed that construction emissions (i.e., 2 pounds [lb]/day of reactive organic gases [ROG], 19 lb/day of oxides of nitrogen [NO<sub>x</sub>], and 39 lb/day of respirable particulate matter [PM<sub>10</sub>]) would remain well within significance thresholds established by the Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District (NSAQMD) (i.e., 136 lb/day for ROG, NO<sub>x</sub>, and PM<sub>10</sub>).

In addition, Exhibit 1-2 summarizes a modeling effort which demonstrates that the use of 6 excavators, 6 rubber-tired dozers, and 3 other pieces of material handling equipment would just exceed the NSAQMD significance thresholds of 136 lb/day for ROG, NO<sub>x</sub>, and PM<sub>10</sub>. Therefore, the LMP requires an emissions reduction plan and the use of BMPs for the implementation of projects that may involve the simultaneous use of more than 6 excavators, 6 rubber-tired dozers, and 2 other pieces of material handling equipment to ensure that construction activities would not exceed air quality standards for construction emissions (Management Review and Coordination Element Goal 5 Task 5.3). The LMP also requires the preparation of a Dust Control Plan detailing construction BMPs to be used to minimize the release of fugitive dust during the construction of any projects involving an acre or more of disturbance (Management Review and Coordination Element Goal 5 Task 5.2). The emissions reduction plan, Dust Control Plan, and BMPs must be submitted to the Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District for approval. Therefore, it is anticipated that construction activities resulting from adoption of the LMP would not exceed air quality standards or cause a considerable cumulative increase of air pollutants.

Proposed restoration projects could include the excavation of historic wetlands, which have a small potential to temporarily release objectionable odors. However, because the hydrology of the creek ecosystems proposed for restoration have been so altered by erosion, it is anticipated that most of these historic wetlands are now too dry to maintain the type of anaerobic decay that sometimes creates objectionable odors associated with wetlands. If these types of odors were released, it is not anticipated that they would be released in large quantities or for long durations. Also, because the wildlife areas are relatively isolated, these odors would not be anticipated to reach any sensitive receptors. Therefore, impacts to air quality resources would be less than significant.

In addition, prior to the implementation of any projects that are consistent with the LMP, the Department would subject them to CEQA review according to CEQA Guidelines Section 15168, in light of the information in this document, to determine if additional CEQA documentation is necessary. The type of additional CEQA documentation completed would be determined based on CEQA Guidelines Sections 15162–15164.

## B.4 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>IV.</b>	<b>Biological Resources. Would the project:</b>				
a)	Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b)	Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c)	Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d)	Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e)	Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f)	Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

## DISCUSSION

**e), f) No impact.** Adoption of the proposed LMP would require no changes to natural habitats or species; therefore, adoption of the LMP would not impact biological resources or conflict with any management plans or policies. The LMP was prepared consistent with other applicable management plans and regulations (see LMP Chapters 2 and 3). In addition, Goals and Tasks in the LMP require that management actions comply with applicable management plans, policies, and regulations protecting biological resources; therefore, implementation of the LMP would cause no policy conflicts.

**a), b), c), d) Less-than-significant impact.** Implementation of some of the management actions described in the proposed LMP would involve temporary habitat disturbance, including disturbance to sensitive and protected riparian and wetland habitats (e.g., restoration or enhancement activities, installation of fencing or signage). This disturbance would also have a potential for adverse effects to special-status species (e.g. yellow warbler), fish and

wildlife movement, and fawning deer. However, all restoration and enhancement actions are proposed with the long-term goal of improving habitat conditions and supporting special-status species populations (e.g. Biological Goal 2 Task 5, Biological Goal 4 Task 3, Watershed Restoration Element). In addition, goals and tasks in the LMP require protection measures for sensitive species and habitats which, when implemented, would reduce potential temporary adverse effects to less-than-significant levels (e.g., Biological Goal 2 Task 6, Biological Goal 4 Task 7, Biological Goal 7 Task 5). Furthermore, the proposed watershed restoration program described in LMP Appendix D includes impact avoidance and minimization measures (watershed restoration program Appendix H) which would minimize potential temporary construction-related impacts to less-than-significant levels. LMP goals and tasks also require that all management actions meet applicable regulatory requirements protecting special-status species and sensitive habitats, such as DFG regulations, USFWS regulations, State Water Quality Control Board regulations, Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, and any applicable local plans or ordinances protecting biological resources. Actions necessary to comply with these regulatory requirements would further protect biological resources. Implementing protection requirements included in the LMP would reduce potential temporary impacts to biological resources to less-than-significant levels, and net project impacts would be beneficial.

In addition, prior to the implementation of any projects that are consistent with the LMP, the Department would subject them to CEQA review according to CEQA Guidelines Section 15168, in light of the information in this document, to determine if additional CEQA documentation is necessary. The type of additional CEQA documentation completed would be determined based on CEQA Guidelines Sections 15162–15164.

## B.5 CULTURAL RESOURCES

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>V.</b>	<b>Cultural Resources. Would the project:</b>				
a)	Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in Section 15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b)	Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c)	Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d)	Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## DISCUSSION

**a), b), c), d) Less-than-significant impact.** Adoption of the proposed LMP would not require any construction or excavation; therefore, adoption of the proposed LMP would not adversely affect archaeological or paleontological resources, or disturb any human remains. Although implementation of some of the management tasks described in the proposed LMP would involve land disturbance (e.g., restoration or enhancement activities, installation of fencing or signage), goals and tasks in the LMP include protection measures for known cultural resources including: requirements for cultural resource surveys prior to ground disturbance, consultation with a qualified archaeologist in the case of an inadvertent discovery, submittal of resource documentation to the California Historical Resources Information System and the National Register of Historic Places, and submittal of evaluations of these resources to the State Historic Preservation Officer and the Office of Historic Preservation, as appropriate. These measures would identify and protect any historic resources prior to their destruction; therefore, impacts to cultural resources would be less than significant.

In addition, prior to the implementation of any projects that are consistent with the LMP, the Department would subject them to CEQA review according to CEQA Guidelines Section 15168, in light of the information in this document, to determine if additional CEQA documentation is necessary. The type of additional CEQA documentation completed would be determined based on CEQA Guidelines Sections 15162–15164.

## B.6 GEOLOGY AND SOILS

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>VI.</b>	<b>Geology and Soils. Would the project:</b>				
	a) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				
	i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? (Refer to California Geological Survey Special Publication 42.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	iv) Landslides?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994, as updated), creating substantial risks to life or property?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

## DISCUSSION

**a), c), d), e) No impact.** Adoption and implementation of the proposed LMP would not require construction of buildings or installation of waste water disposal systems; therefore, the proposed project would not change the current exposure of people to geologic hazards or expansive soils, or involve the use of waste water disposal systems in unsuitable soils.

**b) Less-than-significant impact.** Implementation of the watershed restoration program described in LMP Appendix D would involve substantial ground disturbance which has a potential to increase erosion and the loss of topsoil in the short term. However, these projects would be implemented with a goal of a net decrease in soil erosion or topsoil loss, would include erosion avoidance and minimization measures described in Appendix H of the watershed restoration program, and would be conducted in conformance with regulatory requirements

described in the LMP regarding soil erosion. (See Section B.8 of this Initial Study for additional discussion regarding erosion.) Therefore, net project impacts related to soil erosion or topsoil loss would be beneficial.

In addition, prior to the implementation of any projects that are consistent with the LMP, the Department would subject them to CEQA review according to CEQA Guidelines Section 15168, in light of the information in this document, to determine if additional CEQA documentation is necessary. The type of additional CEQA documentation completed would be determined based on CEQA Guidelines Sections 15162–15164.



## B.7 HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>VII.</b>	<b>Hazards and Hazardous Materials. Would the project:</b>				
a)	Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b)	Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and/or accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c)	Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d)	Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e)	For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f)	For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g)	Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
h)	Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## DISCUSSION

**a), c), d), e), f), g) No impact.** Adoption and implementation of the LMP would not involve routine transport, use, or disposal of any hazardous materials; would not pose any risk of hazardous exposure to school children; would not involve any uses that would affect air traffic; and is anticipated to improve emergency response and evacuation through the implementation of fire management goals and tasks. A computerized database search of various agency lists was conducted for the wildlife areas and surrounding properties to identify potential hazardous contamination sites; none were found (EPA 2008, Cal EPA 2008). Therefore, adoption and

implementation of the LMP would not introduce or intensify any of these hazardous risks to the public or the environment.

**b), h) Less-than-significant impact.** Construction activities could involve the use of heavy construction equipment which use small amounts of hazardous materials such as oils, fuels, and other potentially hazardous substances that are typically associated with construction activities. However, the LMP requires that contractors establish an appropriate staging area, prepare a spill prevention plan, and implement construction BMPs to minimize the risk of hazardous spills.

The wildlife areas are located in a region where wildfire is a large concern. Construction activities (e.g. restoration projects, installation of fencing and signage) that involve the use of mechanical equipment in the wildlife areas would have the potential for increasing wildfire hazard, although not to a significant extent. In addition, adoption and implementation of fuels and fire management goals and tasks included in the LMP, which require the development of a fuels and fire management plan, improved communication with fire response agencies, and the use of BMPs to minimize construction-related fire hazards, is anticipated to decrease potential risks of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires. Therefore, net project impacts related to wildfire hazards would be beneficial.

In addition, prior to the implementation of any projects that are consistent with the LMP, the Department would subject them to CEQA review according to CEQA Guidelines Section 15168, in light of the information in this document, to determine if additional CEQA documentation is necessary. The type of additional CEQA documentation completed would be determined based on CEQA Guidelines Sections 15162–15164.

## B.8 HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>VIII.</b>	<b>Hydrology and Water Quality. Would the project:</b>				
a)	Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b)	Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level that would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c)	Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial on- or off-site erosion or siltation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d)	Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in on- or off-site flooding?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e)	Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f)	Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g)	Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
h)	Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures that would impede or redirect flood flows?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
i)	Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
j)	Result in inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## DISCUSSION

**e), g), h), i) No impact.** Adoption and implementation of the proposed LMP would not involve the use of storm drain systems, the construction of any structures, or the use of a dam. Therefore, adoption and implementation of the LMP would not threaten storm drain capacity, increase 100-year flood hazards, or increase flooding risks as a result of the failure of a levee or dam.

**a), b) c), d), f), j) Less-than-significant impact.** Implementation of watershed restoration tasks described in the LMP have a potential for erosion, sedimentation, associated water quality degradation, and a resulting potential for violating water quality standards or waste discharge requirements. Although these tasks would be implemented with a long-term goal and expectation of improving water quality by reducing erosion and sedimentation (see discussions in LMP Chapter 3.2 and Appendix D), construction activities required to implement these tasks could pose a threat of short-term increases in erosion, sedimentation, and other types of construction-related water pollution. However, goals and tasks in the LMP require protection measures for aquatic habitats and water quality which, when implemented, would reduce potential temporary adverse effects to less-than-significant levels (e.g. Biological Goal 4 Task 7, Biological Goal 7 Task 4, Biological Goal 7 Task 5, Biological Goal 7 Task 6, Watershed Restoration Goal 1 Task 1). In addition, the proposed watershed restoration program described in LMP Appendix D includes impact avoidance and minimization measures (watershed restoration program Appendix H) which would reduce potential temporary construction-related water quality impacts to less-than-significant levels. LMP goals and tasks also require that all management actions meet applicable regulatory requirements protecting aquatic habitats and water quality, such as DFG regulations, USFWS regulations, State Water Quality Control Board regulations, Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, and any applicable local plans or ordinances protecting these resources. Actions necessary to comply with these regulatory requirements would further protect water resources. Implementing protection requirements included in the LMP would reduce potential temporary water quality impacts to less-than-significant levels, and net project results would be beneficial.

Implementation of watershed restoration tasks proposed in the LMP are designed to reconnect Antelope Valley Creek and Bear Valley Creek with their historic floodplains and increase groundwater recharge and storage in those historic floodplains during the wet season. Implementation would, therefore, decrease flooding risks by reducing stream volumes during high-flow events while increasing the annual average groundwater table level (see discussions in LMP Chapter 3.2 and Appendix D). Implementation of the LMP would require no new wells or drilling; therefore, it would cause no decrease in aquifer volumes. Net project impacts to flooding risks and groundwater recharge, elevations, and volumes would all be beneficial.

Goals and tasks described in the LMP include actions that would improve slope stability, thus decreasing the threat of landslides (e.g. Biology Goal 3, Biology Goal 6, Biology Goal 8 Task 1, Fuels and Fire Management Goal 2 Task 2). In addition, watershed restoration activities would occur primarily in meadow areas with shallow slopes that would not be prone to landslides. Finally, implementation of the LMP would not require the construction or occupation of any structures or facilities that could be threatened by landslides. The net project impact to landslide risks would be beneficial.

In addition, prior to the implementation of any projects that are consistent with the LMP, the Department would subject them to CEQA review according to CEQA Guidelines Section 15168, in light of the information in this document, to determine if additional CEQA documentation is necessary. The type of additional CEQA documentation completed would be determined based on CEQA Guidelines Sections 15162–15164.

## B.9 LAND USE AND PLANNING

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>IX.</b>	<b>Land Use and Planning. Would the project:</b>				
a)	Physically divide an established community?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b)	Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to, a general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c)	Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

## DISCUSSION

**a), b), c) No impact.** Adoption and implementation of the LMP would require no changes to existing land uses in the wildlife areas. The wildlife area is managed in conformance with applicable land use requirements, and the LMP was developed in conformance with other applicable management (e.g. Sierra County General Plan). The goals of the LMP provide for natural resource protection and preservation and require that any projects implemented following adoption of the proposed LMP conform with any habitat conservation plans and natural community conservation plans that may be applicable at that time. Adoption and implementation of the LMP would have no impact on land use or planning.

## B.10 MINERAL RESOURCES

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>X.</b>	<b>Mineral Resources. Would the project:</b>				
a)	Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b)	Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

## DISCUSSION

**a), b) No impact.** Adoption and implementation of the LMP would involve no resource extraction. Also, no construction would occur that would prevent future mineral extraction, and no policy changes are proposed regarding mineral recovery. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with mineral resource protection plans or result in the loss of a known mineral resource.

## B.11 NOISE

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>XI.</b>	<b>Noise. Would the project result in:</b>				
a)	Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or in other applicable local, state, or federal standards?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b)	Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c)	A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d)	A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e)	For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f)	For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

## DISCUSSION

**c), e), f) No impact.** Adoption and implementation of the LMP would involve no permanent change in activities occurring in the wildlife areas that would cause a permanent change in ambient noise levels, nor are any changes proposed that would be affected by air traffic noise.

**a), b), d) Less-than-significant impact.** Implementation of some of the management tasks described in the proposed LMP would involve the use of construction equipment (e.g., watershed restoration activities), thus temporarily increasing ambient noise and possibly groundborne vibrations. These activities would be short-term and are not anticipated to result in a substantial increase in ambient noise or vibration levels. Furthermore, because the wildlife area is isolated, these types of short term noise impacts would not be anticipated to reach a substantial number of people.

Because the LMP requires that all actions in the wildlife areas comply with state and federal Endangered Species Acts and other applicable regulations aimed at the protection of special-status species and wildlife communities, projects must be managed (e.g. construction scheduling, use of wildlife surveys) such that potential construction noise would not significantly impact wildlife.

An assessment of potential construction-related noise impacts resulting from watershed restoration activities proposed in AVWA showed that no sensitive receptors exist in close enough proximity to the wildlife area to be exposed to temporary noise levels in excess of standards established in the Sierra County General Plan.

A similar assessment for SCWA indicated that three residences (receptors) adjacent to the proposed restoration project area would have the potential of being exposed to temporary noise levels in excess of standards established in the Sierra County General Plan during construction activities occurring at the downstream end of the watershed. However, a preliminary noise modeling effort (Exhibit 2) was conducted using several conservative assumptions (e.g., construction in the downstream portions of the watershed would include the simultaneous use of no more than one excavator and one front end loader over an eight-hour work day). Construction noise attributed to the project was predicted using the Federal Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment method for construction noise prediction (FTA 2006). Reference emission noise levels and usage factors were based on the Federal Highway Administration Roadway Construction Noise Model (FHWA 2006).

This modeling effort predicts that noise levels at receptors 2 and 3 (57.8 and 56.9 decibels over a 24 hour period [dB L<sub>dn</sub>]), located an estimated 480 and 535 feet from construction activities, would remain well within the Sierra County exterior noise standard of 60 dB L<sub>dn</sub>. Receptor 1, located an estimated 120 feet from construction activities, has a potential of being exposed to noise levels (69.8 dB L<sub>dn</sub>) slightly higher than the 60 dB L<sub>dn</sub> standard. However, referenced equipment noise levels are considered conservative, and this preliminary modeling effort does not take into account site specific noise attenuation features that may be present.

In addition, the LMP requires that a noise reduction plan be prepared for any projects in SCWA that may involve the simultaneous use of multiple pieces of construction equipment within 500 feet of any sensitive receptors (e.g. residences) to ensure that construction activities will not exceed Sierra County General Plan noise standards. Construction BMPs (e.g. limiting the simultaneous use of multiple pieces of construction equipment, limiting work hours, using commercial or plywood noise barriers, consulting with Sierra County and nearby residents) must be implemented to minimize construction noise such that it does not substantially increase ambient noise levels or expose sensitive receptors to excessive noise levels for an excessive period of time. Therefore, it is anticipated that implementation of the LMP would not result in noise levels in excess of Sierra County General Plan standards, and that increases in ambient noise levels and groundborne vibrations would be less than significant.

Finally, prior to the implementation of any projects that are consistent with the LMP, the Department would subject them to CEQA review according to CEQA Guidelines Section 15168, in light of the information in this document, to determine if additional CEQA documentation is necessary. The type of additional CEQA documentation completed would be determined based on CEQA Guidelines Sections 15162–15164.



## B.12 POPULATION AND HOUSING

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>XII.</b>	<b>Population and Housing. Would the project:</b>				
a)	Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b)	Displace substantial numbers of existing homes, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c)	Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

## DISCUSSION

**a), b), c). No impact.** Adoption and implementation of the LMP would not involve housing changes, nor would it induce growth by the provision of new infrastructure or by the removal of any barriers to growth. Implementation of some of the management goals and tasks may require a minimal addition of staff hours, but this would not require a substantial change in the numbers of existing homes. Adoption and implementation of the LMP would have no impact on population or housing.

## B.13 PUBLIC SERVICES

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>XIII.</b>	<b>Public Services. Would the project:</b>				
	a) Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, or the need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives for any of the public services:				
	Fire protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Police protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Schools?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Parks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Other public facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## DISCUSSION

**a) Less-than-significant impact.** Adoption of the proposed LMP would not require substantial changes to existing levels of public services. Implementation of public use, facilities, and fire management goals could require a minimal increase in staff hours per year by the Department, the County Sheriff's department, Sierraville Ranger District, and other cooperating agencies. However, these potential minimal increases would not be anticipated to create the need for new or altered facilities. Additionally, in the long term, fire protection needs may decline with reduction of fuel loads and restoration of a natural mixed age structure forest that is less likely to enable development of large wildfires. Impacts related to the provision of public services would be less than significant.

## B.14 RECREATION

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>XIV. Recreation. Would the project:</b>					
a)	Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b)	Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## DISCUSSION

**a), b) Less-than-significant Impact.** Adoption of the proposed LMP would require no change in levels of recreational use; therefore, adoption of the LMP would not require the expansion of recreational facilities, or adversely affect recreational facilities or the environment. Implementing several management goals in the LMP would provide support for the continued use of the wildlife area for public recreation activities such as hunting, archery, and birding; however, no increase in these activities is proposed or anticipated. Implementation of Public Use Goal 3 Task 4 could modify the type of recreation that the wildlife areas experience (i.e., a decrease in unauthorized OHV use and an increase in hiking and environmental education), but this is not anticipated to increase existing levels in a manner or to an extent that deterioration of existing resources would occur. A small increase in the number of hikers would not exceed the carrying capacity of the natural resources or degrade existing natural features. Elimination of unauthorized OHV use in the wildlife areas could substantially improve environmental conditions. Recreational impacts would be less than significant.

In addition, prior to the implementation of any projects that are consistent with the LMP, the Department would subject them to CEQA review according to CEQA Guidelines Section 15168, in light of the information in this document, to determine if additional CEQA documentation is necessary. The type of additional CEQA documentation completed would be determined based on CEQA Guidelines Sections 15162–15164.

## B.15 TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>XV.</b>	<b>Transportation/Traffic. Would the project:</b>				
a)	Cause an increase in traffic which is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system (i.e., result in a substantial increase in either the number of vehicle trips, the volume to capacity ratio on roads, or congestion at intersections)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b)	Exceed, individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c)	Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d)	Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e)	Result in inadequate emergency access?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f)	Result in inadequate parking capacity?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g)	Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

## DISCUSSION

**b), c), f), g) No Impact.** Adoption and implementation of the proposed LMP would require no permanent changes to automobile or air traffic patterns or volumes, or to existing parking conditions; therefore, adoption and implementation of the proposed LMP would not be anticipated to exceed traffic standards, or interfere with any alternative transportation programs.

**a), d), e) Less-than-significant impact.** Implementation of some of the management tasks described in the proposed LMP (e.g. watershed restoration projects) could involve a slight increase in construction-related vehicle trips in the region. However, because the existing traffic load is light and the existing street system has available capacity to accommodate a minor and temporary increase in vehicle trips, impacts to traffic or congestion would be less than significant.

The proposed LMP includes goals and tasks intended to eliminate illegal OHV use on County and State roads in and around the wildlife areas, and to improve communication and information exchange with fire response crews. Therefore, implementation of the LMP would be anticipated to reduce incompatible transportation uses and improve emergency access.

## B.16 UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES		Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>XVI.</b>	<b>Utilities and Service Systems. Would the project:</b>				
a)	Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b)	Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c)	Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d)	Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e)	Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider that serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand, in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f)	Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g)	Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

## DISCUSSION

**a), b), c), e), f), g). No Impact.** Adoption and implementation of the LMP would involve no wastewater treatment, no use of storm drain facilities, and no solid waste disposal. There would be no impact to these utilities.

**d) Less-than-significant impact.** Bear Valley Creek, which is proposed for restoration, is part of an adjudicated watershed. The Department and several downstream landowners have appropriate and riparian water rights for the water supply conveyed in this creek. It is anticipated that implementation of the watershed restoration program described in Appendix D would improve stream flow timing and maintain total downstream water supply. Following restoration, more water would be stored in the upper watershed areas during the wet season and, therefore, more water would be available for base stream flows during the dry-season. Analyses of water balances resulting from similar watershed restoration projects have shown no change in the volume of water moving through the system, only in the timing. (See LMP Chapter 3.2 and Appendix D for further discussion of anticipated water supply improvements.) Therefore, potential impacts to existing water supplies would be less than significant, and no new or expanded entitlements are anticipated.

In addition, prior to the implementation of any projects that are consistent with the LMP, the Department would subject them to CEQA review according to CEQA Guidelines Section 15168, in light of the information in this document, to determine if additional CEQA documentation is necessary. The type of additional CEQA documentation completed would be determined based on CEQA Guidelines Sections 15162–15164.

## B.17 MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>XVII. Mandatory Findings of Significance.</b>				
a) Does the project have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of an endangered, rare, or threatened species, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Does the project have environmental effects that will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<small>Authority: Public Resources Code Sections 21083 and 21087.  Reference: Public Resources Code Sections 21080(c), 21080.1, 21080.3, 21082.1, 21083, 21083.3, 21093, 21094, 21151; <i>Sundstrom v. County of Mendocino</i>, 202 Cal.App.3d 296 (1988); <i>Leonoff v. Monterey Board of Supervisors</i>, 222 Cal.App.3d 1337 (1990).</small>				

## DISCUSSION

**a). Less-than-significant impact.** The LMP was developed to summarize and document management actions intended for the purpose of protecting natural and cultural resources located within the wildlife areas. Some projects that may be implemented as a result of adoption of the proposed LMP would have a potential for impacts to these resources (e.g., hunting, restoration or enhancement activities). However, goals and tasks in the LMP include protection measures for these resources that would eliminate or minimize potential impacts to less-than-significant levels. Adoption of the LMP and implementation of the goals and tasks contained therein would have a net benefit in protecting and enhancing biological and cultural resources.

**b) Less-than-significant impact.** Adoption of the proposed LMP and implementation of the goals and tasks contained therein would not require any substantial infrastructure improvements or new construction, and any projects implemented would be conducted following all applicable regulatory requirements. In addition, implementation of the LMP is anticipated to result in a net benefit to environmental conditions. Therefore, although there is a potential for some temporary and less-than-significant impacts to the environment, none of these impacts would be cumulatively considerable.

**c) Less-than-significant impact.** The proposed project is a land management plan that generally continues the existing uses of the wildlife area with improvements to operations and protection and enhancement of the

environment. Implementation of the LMP would comply with all applicable laws and regulations. As a result, adoption of the proposed LMP and implementation of the goals and tasks contained therein would not have any direct or indirect environmental effects that would cause substantial adverse effects on human beings.



## REFERENCES

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Federal Transit Administration. 2006 (May). Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment. FTA Report FTA-VA-90-1003-06. Available: <[http://www.fta.dot.gov/documents/FTA\\_Noise\\_and\\_Vibration\\_Manual.pdf](http://www.fta.dot.gov/documents/FTA_Noise_and_Vibration_Manual.pdf)>. Accessed March 2, 2008.

## RESPONSE TO COMMENTS

This section provides the Department of Fish and Game's (Department's) responses to comments received during the public review period of the Draft Initial Study and Negative Declaration (IS/ND) for the Antelope Valley and Smithneck Creek Wildlife Areas and Management Plan (LMP). Two comment letters were received during the public review, which are reproduced below. Comments on environmental topics are marked with margin lines and numbered on the reproduced letters.

## NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE COMMISSION

915 CAPITOL MALL, ROOM 364  
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August 18, 2008

Paul Raquel  
CA Department of Fish and Game  
1701 Nimbus Road, Suite A  
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670

RE: SCH# 2008082031 Antelope Valley and Smithneck Creek Wildlife Areas Land Management Plan; Sierra County.

Dear Mr. Raquel:

The Native American Heritage Commission has reviewed the Notice of Completion (NOC) regarding the above referenced project. The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) states that any project that causes a substantial adverse change in the significance of an historical resource, which includes archeological resources, is a significant effect requiring the preparation of an EIR (CEQA guidelines 15064(b)). To adequately comply with this provision and mitigate project-related impacts on archaeological resources, the Commission recommends the following actions be required:

- ✓ Contact the appropriate Information Center for a record search to determine:
  - If a part or all of the area of project effect (APE) has been previously surveyed for cultural resources.
  - If any known cultural resources have already been recorded on or adjacent to the APE.
  - If the probability is low, moderate, or high that cultural resources are located in the APE.
  - If a survey is required to determine whether previously unrecorded cultural resources are present.
- ✓ If an archaeological inventory survey is required, the final stage is the preparation of a professional report detailing the findings and recommendations of the records search and field survey.
  - The final report containing site forms, site significance, and mitigation measures should be submitted immediately to the planning department. All information regarding site locations, Native American human remains, and associated funerary objects should be in a separate confidential addendum, and not be made available for public disclosure.
  - The final written report should be submitted within 3 months after work has been completed to the appropriate regional archaeological Information Center.
- ✓ Contact the Native American Heritage Commission for:
  - A Sacred Lands File Check. **Sacred Lands File check completed, no sites indicated**
  - A list of appropriate Native American Contacts for consultation concerning the project site and to assist in the mitigation measures. **Native American Contacts List attached**
- ✓ Lack of surface evidence of archeological resources does not preclude their subsurface existence.
  - Lead agencies should include in their mitigation plan provisions for the identification and evaluation of accidentally discovered archeological resources, per California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) §15064.5(f). In areas of identified archaeological sensitivity, a certified archaeologist and a culturally affiliated Native American, with knowledge in cultural resources, should monitor all ground-disturbing activities.
  - Lead agencies should include in their mitigation plan provisions for the disposition of recovered artifacts, in consultation with culturally affiliated Native Americans.
  - Lead agencies should include provisions for discovery of Native American human remains in their mitigation plan. Health and Safety Code §7050.5, CEQA §15064.5(e), and Public Resources Code §5097.98 mandates the process to be followed in the event of an accidental discovery of any human remains in a location other than a dedicated cemetery.

Sincerely,

*Katy Sanchez*

Katy Sanchez  
Program Analyst  
(916) 653-4040

CC: State Clearinghouse

**Comment 1-1:** Contact the appropriate Information Center for a record search.

**Response:** A records search was conducted for preparation of the LMP. The following text has been added to the LMP in “Section 3.4.4. Documented Cultural Resources” (p. 3.4-6): “Although conducting a record search through the California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS) is often an initial step in researching a project area within California, it was determined that the Sierraville Ranger Station of the U.S. Forest Service maintained the most detailed and updated files. Consequently, records on file at this location were consulted in lieu of those curated by the CHRIS.”

**Comment 1-2:** If an archaeological inventory survey is required, the final stage is the preparation of a professional report detailing the findings and recommendations of the records search and field survey.

**Response:** An archaeological inventory survey was not required for preparation of the LMP. Tasks listed in the LMP as part of “Cultural Goal 2: Preserve all significant prehistoric and historic-era cultural resources and present-day Native American cultural properties that documentary and/or field investigations identify within AVWA and SCWA” include the procedures that should be followed to preserve cultural resources on the wildlife areas, including the preparation of professional reports.

**Comment 1-3:** Contact the Native American Heritage Commission for: a Sacred Lands File Check.; a list of appropriate Native American Contacts for consultation concerning the project site and to assist in the mitigation measures.

**Response:** The Sacred Lands File was consulted and no sites were indicated. The following text was added to “Section 3.4.4. Documented Cultural Resources” (p. 3.4-6): “In order to determine if any culturally important sites or locations were within the AVWA or SCWA that might be of concern to the Native American community, the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) was contacted and a review of the Sacred Lands File was requested. A list of appropriate Native American tribal organizations and representatives that might have an interest in or concerns with the LMP was identified. The NAHC reported that no sensitive properties were situated within the AVWA or SCWA. The Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California were contacted, in accordance with the NAHC’s suggestion, but no comments were received.”

**Comment 1-4:** Lack of surface evidence of archaeological resources does not preclude their subsurface existence. Lead agencies should include in their mitigation plan provisions for the identification and evaluation of accidentally discovered archaeological resources (...). Lead agencies should include in their mitigation plan provisions for the disposition of recovered artifacts, in consultation with culturally affiliated Native Americans. Lead agencies should include provisions for discovery of Native American human remains in their mitigation plan. (...)

**Response:** These suggested requirements and recommended activities are covered under Tasks 1, 2 and 3 of “Cultural Goal 2: Preserve all significant prehistoric and historic-era cultural resources and present-day Native American cultural properties that documentary and/or field investigations identify within AVWA and SCWA”.

Gale Dupree  
P.O. Box 428  
179 Smithneck Road  
Loyalton, CA 96118  
September 5, 2008

Paul Raquel, Senior Biologist Supervisor (Wildlife)  
Department of Fish and Game  
Wildlife Management Programs  
North Central Region  
1701 Nimbus Road, Suite A  
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670

Dear Mr. Raquel:

I wish to comment on the Antelope Valley and Smithneck Creek Wildlife Areas Draft Management Plan. At the Loyalton public meeting on November 14, 2007 I commented on Fire Management – Need to thin out the young tree thickets along Bear Valley Road (written and verbal) as it enters the WMA from Sierra Brooks to protect the homes from wildfire. This is not addressed in the draft. Apparently OHV's are excluded from using the WMA's, but no posting has been done. Can they use the main roads?


There is no plan for controlling invasive weeds. If the weeds are not controlled before the meadow/stream restoration begins then most likely the weeds will be spread further through the area.

I would like to be made a Fish & Game volunteer coordinator for the weed problems to work with Tim Gibson. I could get volunteers to dig up and dispose of the Musk and other thistles in the area. This is the approved method for eradication. Native Snowy thistle would not be removed.

I concur with meadow restoration of Antelope Valley and Bear Valley.

I recommend additional planning be done to add restoration projects for the Hallelujah Wildlife Area to restore burned vegetation with bitterbrush and other deer friendly plants, including erosion control.

Sincerely,

  
Gale Dupree  
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179 Smithneck Road  
Loyalton, CA 96118  
530-993-6051

*I would also like to  
do aspen restoration  
I have training*

**Comment 2-1:** Need to thin out the young tree thickets along Bear Valley Road as it enters the WMA from Sierra Brooks to protect homes from wildfire.

**Response:** The Department agrees that the vegetation on the Smithneck Creek Wildlife Area along Bear Valley Road should be maintained to meet the goals of the LMP, including “Fire Goal 2: Protect people and property from fire hazards while maintaining sensitive resources to the extent practicable” (p. 4-19). Specifically, this would be part of Task 3 under this goal: “Develop a ‘controlled fire’ and vegetation management program to stabilize fuel loads, encourage natural synecology, and prevent catastrophic fire.” The following text has been added to this task: “The program should include vegetation management measures along Bear Valley Road to reduce potential fire hazards.”

**Comment 2-2:** Apparently OHV’s are excluded from using the WMA’s, but no posting has been done. Can they use main roads?”

**Response:** Signs are posted prohibiting access by unauthorized vehicles. Posting additional signage that informs the public about OHV use regulations is part of “Public Use Goal 1: Install signage that provides information to the public about compatible public uses of AVWA and SCWA” (p. 4-21). Specifically, Task 2 under this goal states: “Inform users regarding compatible public uses of AVWA and SCWA by providing bulleting boards at formal entrances to the wildlife areas. Include information such as: (...) OHV use regulations.”

**Comment 2-3:** There is no plan for controlling invasive weeds. If the weeds are not controlled before meadow/stream restoration begins then most likely the weeds will be spread further through the area.

**Response:** The LMP includes specific tasks to control invasive weeds, including the tasks under “Biological Goal 3: Prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species, and manage existing infestations.” (p. 4-7). Other invasive plants management tasks in the LMP include: Biological Goal 1 – Task 5 (p. 4-4), Biological Goal 8 – Task 2 (p. 4-9), Fire Goal 2 – Task 5 (p.4-20), and Management Goal 4 – Task 7 (p. 4-24).

**Comment 2-4:** I concur with meadow restoration on Antelope Valley and Bear Valley.

**Response:** Comment noted.

**Comment 2-5:** I recommend additional planning be done to add restoration projects for the Halleluja Wildlife Area.

**Response:** Restoration planning for the Halleluja Junction Wildlife Area is not a part of this LMP.